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AUTHOR Greene, Brenda M.
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ABSTRACT

A case study examined how a basic writer read, identified, and proposed solutions to textual problems in two drafts of texts that she wished to improve. The subject engaged in a modified form of a think-aloud protocol and an open-ended interview. Data generated from the participant were analyzed to determine the degree of miscue, the kinds of problem identification and resolution strategies used, and whether her perceptions of her reading to improve texts approximated her performance. Findings suggest the number of miscues were minimal and did not appear to interfere with her ability to identify and resolve textual problems. Most of the problems identified were on the semantic level of discourse and related to cohesiveness, clarity, and completeness. The findings also suggest that her perceptions of how she read to improve texts correlated with what she actually did. (An appendix of data is attached.) (RS)

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READING WITH THE INTENTION TO IMPROVE TEXTS:

A CASE STUDY

Brenda M. Greene

Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Running Head

Reading to Improve Texts

Mailing Address

4709 Avenue K
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234

CS009623

ABSTRACT

READING WITH THE INTENTION TO IMPROVE TEXTS: A CASE STUDY

This paper represents the findings from a case study of how a basic writer read, identified and proposed solutions to problems in two drafts of texts that she wished to improve. The methods for obtaining data included a modified form of a think-aloud protocol and an open-ended interview. Data generated from the participant were analyzed to determine a) the degree to which she miscued b) the kinds of problem identification and resolution strategies she used, and c) whether her perceptions of her reading with the intention to improve texts approximated her performance. The findings revealed that although there were instances when this writer miscued, the number of miscues were minimal and did not appear to interfere with her ability to identify and resolve textual problems. The writer identified problems which were classified as problems relating to the lexical, syntactic, and semantic level of discourse. Most of the problems were classified as problems on the semantic level of discourse and related to cohesiveness, clarity, and completeness. The writer relied on her intuition to solve many of the problems and her recommendations tended to be general. Her perceptions of how she read to improve texts correlated with what she actually did.

READING WITH THE INTENTION TO IMPROVE TEXTS: A CASE STUDY

In a paper on "What is the Value of Connecting Reading and Writing", Robert J. Tierney and Margie Leys end their paper with the question: "Are we preparing our students to be proficient readers of their own writing"? (Tierney & Leys, 1986, p.26) Tierney and Leys pose this question after discussing the relationship between reading and writing. They inform us that there are a number of studies which reveal that good readers may or may not be good writers and good writers may or may not be good readers. They remind us that the findings of these studies reflect that research on the reading/writing relationship is very complex and dependent on variables such as the amount of reading and writing experiences students engage in, the methods which are used to evaluate these experiences, students' perceptions of themselves as proficient readers and writers, and our perceptions of the relationship between reading and writing. Implicit in Tierney's and Leys' question related to how we prepare students to be readers of their writing is the recognition that there is adequate documentation on the value of connecting reading and writing. Our task as researchers/instructors is to consider how we help students realize this connection.

As a researcher/instructor in the area of basic writing, the question raised by Tierney and Leys (1986) reflects my concern

with how basic writers read their texts in progress. My concern could be expressed as: How proficient are basic writers at engaging in the kind of reading that is required to revise their texts? To explore this question, I conducted a case study in which I examined the strategies that basic writers used to improve texts. I classified these strategies as problem identification and resolution strategies and focused my study on describing three basic writers who read texts and identified and proposed solutions to problems in these texts.

In order to provide a holistic framework for observing how the basic writers of my study read, identified and proposed solutions to textual problems, this paper presents the findings generated from one writer who read, identified and proposed solutions to problems in two of her texts. For the purposes of confidentiality, this writer is called Marie.

Design of the Study

Marie met with the researcher/instructor for four sessions. Each session lasted from 60-90 minutes. All sessions were taped. The length of time for each session varied with the nature of the task.

Data Collection

Three kinds of data were collected for this study. First, data from Marie's oral reading performance were collected in order to determine when Marie made miscues as she read her texts with the intention of improving them. Second, data from Marie's

think-aloud protocol were collected in two phases. The first phase involved retrospective reporting, a technique used to obtain Marie's comments on problems with the text and on ways that she could resolve these problems. The second phase involved a stimulated recall interview. This interview was conducted in order to enable the researcher to ask Marie whether there were parts of the text which were particularly problematic. Finally, data from an open-ended interview were collected in order to create a description of Marie's educational background and a means by which she could discuss her insights and perceptions about the strategies she used to read her texts with the intention of improving them.

An overview of the tasks required at each session follows.

Session One-Practice Session

Marie orally read a text of her own choice;

Marie orally reread the entire text and identified and proposed solutions to problems in the text;

Marie orally reread text, stopped whenever she saw a problem and identified and proposed solutions to problems;

Researcher asked Marie whether there were parts of the text which were problematic.

Sessions Two & Three-Oral Reading & Think-Aloud Protocols

Marie orally read two texts she had written in class;

Marie orally reread entire texts and identified and proposed solutions to problems;

Marie orally reread own texts, stopped whenever she saw a problem and identified and proposed solutions to these problems;

Researcher asked Marie whether there were parts of the texts which were problematic.

Session Four-Open/Ended Interview

Marie described her educational background and her perceptions of reading, writing, and reading with the intention to improve texts.

Data Analysis

Data were transcribed, coded, and treated in three ways. Since the first session was a practice session, none of the data generated from this session were reported. Data from sessions two and three were analyzed to determine the degree to which Marie miscued and to determine the kinds of problem identification and resolution strategies she used. Data from the open-ended interview were compiled to provide an educational pespective of Marie and to provide a record of her perception of the reading and writing process.

Goodman's Taxonomy (1973) for classifying miscues was used to code the miscues that Marie made as she orally read her texts. A modified form of Linda Baker's (1985) taxonomy for coding and classifying the standards that college students use to evaluate their comprehension of expository texts was used to code the

kinds of problem identification and resolution strategies that Marie used as she read her texts. Since the researcher wanted to give Marie an opportunity to discuss her background as openly as possible, she asked Marie a series of questions. These questions served as a starting point for enabling Marie to talk as freely as she could.

Three basic skills instructors were trained to code the data generated from the think-aloud protocols. Inter-rater reliability was 94%.

Synopsis of Marie

Marie was a 27 year old student from Guyana, South America who eagerly volunteered to participate in the research project. As a child she attended a Catholic girl's school until the age of twelve. She then went to a girl's school where she received home economics training. She did not take any academic subjects in this training school.

At the age of fifteen, Marie left Guyana, came to the United States, and attended an inner city high school where she was required to take basic general education courses. She graduated from this high school and attended a community college in the inner city for six months. While in this college, she was required to take a basic course in reading and writing.

Marie came to the college where the research took place eight years after her attendance at community college. The reading and writing placement scores that she received upon

her entrance into this college revealed that she should be placed in first level basic reading and writing courses.

Findings

Analysis of First Text

The first text that Marie wrote and chose to respond to was entitled "What Will Male and Female Relationships Be Like in the Future?". This text was one of the topics assigned after class discussion of an essay on the status of Black male and female relationships. The following reflects the miscues that Marie made in this text.

What Will Male and Female Relationships
Be Like in the Future?

By the year 2000, male and female relationships will be back to the traditional ways.

1 Now male and female relationship (relations) are more single men and women. Who have more problems than anything else. Women are
2 having more children and living as single parent (parents), because some
3/4/5/6 fathers (father) have ran (run) off and leave the mothers (mother) with all the burden.
7/8 To raised (raise) the children without a good meal to eat, and no child
9 support and a proper place to live. On the other hand (hands), men are not ready for commitment or responsibility. They want to enjoy life, while they are still young. There are more sexual
10 transmitting diseases (disease), such as herps and Aids.
11 In the future male and female relationships would (will) be back

to traditional tradition. People will would be dating with commitment, they will would be dating friend friends rather than just a mate, because they feel the relationship will last for a longer periods period. Rather than one person to fulfill there needs. There will would be more interracial relationship relationships, black women will be openly dating and marrying white men. Also the divorce rate will be less.

The main idea of now and the future male and female relationship will would be right back to the traditional ways. Hoping that men and women will would stay together until death take them apart part. They would have a better future, by being more supportive and share common interests.

An analysis of the miscues made by Marie revealed that she only made 22 miscues as she read this text. Of the 22 miscues made by Marie, more than half resulted in either the deletion or insertion of an inflectional ending or a word. In most cases, the inflectional ending involved the insertion or deletion of the "s" on a noun, a language characteristic reflected in Black English Vernacular (BEV) (Aponte, 1985). According to Goodman's Taxonomy (1973), this type of miscue would be either attributed to graphic or phonemic proximity or to the fact that the participant was bidialectal and therefore capable of speaking, reading, and writing in at least two dialects. Since Marie's miscues could be attributed to graphophonic or syntactic proximity and/or dialect, they were syntactically and semantically acceptable and did not interfere with her

understanding of the text.

In addition to the fact that readers' miscues may interfere with their comprehension of the text, there is also the possibility that readers' miscues may interfere with their ability to see the lexical and syntactical problems of a text. This type of interference is especially significant in the study of basic writers as readers of their own texts. As Bartlett's (1982) research suggests, writers as readers of their own texts may be so close to their texts that their "privileged information" inhibits them from seeing the lexical and syntactical problems inherent in their texts. Thus, an analysis of the miscues made by Marie was conducted to reveal the degree to which these miscues may have interfered with her ability to see the lexical and syntactical problems of the text. Marie identified the following sentences as problematic during her discussion of textual problems.

> Women are having more children and living as single parent, because some fathers have run off and leave the mothers with all the burden. To raised the children without a good meal to eat, no child support and a proper place to live.

When Marie read the sentence: To raised the children without a good meal to eat, no child support and a proper place to live- she connected this sentence to the previous sentence so that it was no longer a sentence fragment. She also inserted "and" between "eat" and "no." Her sentence was thus read as:

Women are having more children and living as single parents because some father have run off and leave the mother with all the burden to raise the children without a good meal to eat and no child support and a proper place to live.

Marie had thus corrected a syntactical problem during her oral reading performance. However, when she identified problems in her text, she did not identify this sentence fragment as a problem. It appears that Marie may not have been aware of this problem because she had orally read it as part of a complete sentence. Her oral reading performance influenced what she saw as problematic in her text. The fact that Marie read this fragment as a complete sentence suggests that she had the knowledge that she had written a sentence fragment. Her problem was in not accessing that knowledge as she read her text with the intention of improving it. A discussion of Marie's problem identification and resolution strategies follows.

Think-Aloud Protocol:Problem Identification and Resolution Strategies

Marie identified problems and resolutions on the syntactic and semantic levels of text. (See Appendix) Her comments reflected her concern with the rhetorical as well as the syntactical problems of the text.

As Marie identified problems in the text, she first indicated that there was a problem with the first paragraph.

She stated that: "In this first part it is not fully developed. This paragraph is too short. Paragraphs should have more than three sentence. This only have about one sentence so it's not fully developed." Marie's first paragraph read: "By the year 2000, male and female relationships will be back to the traditional ways."

Marie's comments revealed that she was able to identify this as a problem and she knew the reason it was a problem. However, she was not able to offer specific examples of how she would resolve the problem. Her suggested resolution was general and her comments relating to it were coded as strategies referring to informational clarity and structural cohesiveness.

It appears that Marie focused on the concept that paragraphs usually had more than one sentence and internalized this as a "rule" that she should be aware of. However, the fact that Marie wrote this sentence as the sentence for her introductory paragraph suggests that although she may have internalized it as a "rule," she was unable to apply this "rule" in her writing. This "rule" was part of Marie's cognitive knowledge although it was still abstract for her. The rule may have still been abstract for her because in her mind it represented a formal construct of the paragraph and not what she defined as a paragraph. Her comments indicated that she was more concerned with the form of the paragraph than she was with determining what was said in the paragraph.

Marie's concern with other rhetorical problems of the essay was revealed in the attention she gave to the second paragraph in her essay. She spent a great amount of time reading and rereading this paragraph and identified problems related to propositional cohesiveness, syntax, structural cohesiveness and informational clarity. The paragraph read as follows:

> Now male and female relationship are more single men and women. Who have more problems than anything else. Women are having more children and living as single parent, because some fathers have ran off and leave the mothers with all the burden. To raised the children without a good meal to eat, no child support and a proper place to live. On the other hand, men are not ready for commitment or responsibility. They want to enjoy life, while they are still young. There are more sexual transmitting diseases, such as herps and Aids.

An example of a problem with propositional cohesiveness was revealed in Marie's text when she described what men were doing now. She used the term "on the other hand", a transitional phrase which showed contrast rather than a transitional phrase which showed "addition or cause and effect" to describe what men were currently doing. This suggests that Marie was aware of the importance of cohesive ties but was unable to distinguish between their functions. The use of this term resulted in a

problem of propositional cohesiveness in this paragraph.

The syntactical problems in this paragraph were manifested as problems of sentence fragments, sentence logic and verb tense. Marie's awareness of a syntactical problem was observed when she questioned the sentence: Who have more problems than anything else. She asked: "Who are we talking about?" She stated she would take out who and combine it with the previous sentence to read: "Now male and female relationships are more single men and women having more problem that anything else." She stated that she took out "who" because "it didn't fit there." Marie was thus aware of the problem of clarity, syntax, and sentence logic although she was unable to adequately resolve the problem. In combining the fragment with the previous sentence, she had given her revised sentence another kind of problem, a problem reflected by Shaughnessy's (1977) concept of the mismanagement of complexity. Marie's attempted resolution of this problem reflected that she had a sense of the constraints of standard written English. She knew there was a problem, had an idea of how to solve the problem, but was unaware that a different type of problem now existed in her paper.

Marie's attempt to address a lexical problem could be seen in the sentence: Women are having more children and living as single parent, because some fathers have ran off and leave the mothers with all the burden. She spent some time trying to

reword this sentence so that she could be more specific. She eventually decided that she would take out "burden" and say that: "Women are having more children and living as single parents because some fathers has run off and leave the mother without any financial support." Marie had thus identified, diagnosed and solved a problem in this sentence. Although her recommended change was to substitute "financial support" for "burden", her desire to change this word was motivated by a need to resolve the discrepancy between what she wrote and what she intended to say.

When Marie identified problems in paragraph three, she indicated that she had not been clear about what she meant by the word "tradition." The first sentence of this paragraph sentence read: In the future male and female relationships would be back to tradition. Marie's identification of the word, "tradition", as a problem in this sentence represented her attempt to achieve informational clarity and completeness in the her text. She stated that: "Tradition needs some explanation; I should explain in what way." She was thus aware of a problem but was unable to give clear examples of how she could resolve the problem.

Marie also indicated that there was a problem in paragraph three with the sentence: People would be dating with commitment, they would be dating friend rather than just a mate, because they feel the relationship will last for a longer periods.

Marie stated that she needed to take out: ". . . they would be dating friend," but she did not know what else to put there. Her identification of the problem revealed a concern with informational clarity as much as a concern with the syntax of the sentence. She finally decided to revise the sentence to read: "People would be dating with commitment if a couple feels that a relationship will last for a longer period." This revised sentence thus represented Marie's attempt to clarify the concept that a relationship will last longer if people who date are committed to the relationship.

Marie had thus been able to identify the problem although she was not clear about why this was a problem. She relied on her intuitive sense of sentence clarity to identify the problem. Despite the fact that she only had a vague sense of what the problem in this sentence was, she was able to develop a specific recommendation for solving it. However, as in her previous recommendations, her solution was restricted by her inability to manage the syntax of a complex sentence.

Although Marie did not address all the semantic and syntactical problems in paragraph three, she was concerned with attempting to make the paragraph "sound" better. This attempt to address the problems because they did not sound right seemed to indicate that Marie was aware that the text had syntactical problems and semantic problems. As a result of this awareness, she relied on her intuitive sense about the constructs of

standard written English to attempt to resolve these problems. She did not have an adequate command of standard English patterns in the constructs which she brought to the text; therefore, her ability to resolve these problems was limited.

In the concluding paragraph, Marie identified the sentence: "They would have a better future, by being more supportive and share common interests," as problematic. She stated that she needed to give more examples of supportive help. Her recommendation for how she could elaborate on the sentence was to add the following: ". . . like helping around the house, sharing common interests like going to the movies, parties, dinner, church." Although Marie was not clear about how she would add this information, she was concerned about a problem of clarification. She was thus able to identify a problem and propose a solution to solving this problem.

Marie was also concerned with the statement: Hoping that men and women would stay together until death take them part. Despite the fact that she did not indicate that this was a sentence fragment, she stated that this: ". . . doesn't sound right. . . Something needs to be done there." Is it, "until death take them part or until death do them part?" She was thus concerned with the wording of an idiomatic phrase and attempted to rely on her "ear" to solve the problem. These statements reflected her concern that her text express informational clarity and completeness.

An analysis of Marie's attempt to improve her own text thus revealed that according to Baker's standards used to evaluate expository prose, she had a concern with informational clarity and completeness and a concern with syntax. She attempted to identify problems of syntax just as often as she attempted to identify problems of informational clarity. In fact she used strategies on the semantic level more than she used strategies on the lexical or syntactic level to identify problems in her text. She also attempted to propose solutions for solving the problems she identified but she was not always successful because she had difficulty managing complexity.

Marie's discussion of the text as a whole revealed that she was aware that parts of her text were not developed enough and clear enough. She realized that there was some confusion in the way her ideas were presented. Her problem identification and resolution strategies were limited by discussion of specific parts of her text, rather than the purpose and intention of her text. She was concerned with rhetorical problems within parts of the text rather than with rhetorical problems of the entire text.

In Marie's stimulated recall interview, her comments and recommendations to solve the problems inherent in the text also reflected a concern with making sure that there were enough details within each of the paragraphs of the text and with determining whether the sentences were syntactically correct so

that "they" would know what she meant. She indicated that she should give "them" more details on what she was "speaking about."

Marie also referred to "they" and "them" when identifying problems and resolutions during her stimulated recall interview. This suggests that Marie was aware that her text could present difficulties for a reader. She seemed aware that in order for her text to be understood, the reader of a text was just as important as the writer of the text.

Analysis of Second Text

The second text which Marie chose to analyze was entitled "Why Couples Decide Not to Have Children". This text was written three weeks after the first text and was a result of one of the topics given after a class discussion on the status of the American family. In the assignment, Marie was given several possible reasons as to why couples decide not to have children and she was asked to agree or disagree with the reasons given. Marie decided to agree with the reasons given and attempted to use her personal experiences to support her position. The following reflects the miscues that Marie made in this text.

Why Couples Decide Not to Have Children

Nowadays
Nowaday, many couple decide not to have children. In their opinion children are expensive. Children drain parents of there

energy and time. Many children even interfere in the relationship between husband and wife.

In their opinion children are expensive, because children mature and as they develops, parent always have to buy clothes, coats and shoes. For example the cost of shoes, clothes and coats will amount to about $500.00 a year. All of this money does not add up to make the expensives of children.

Children drain parents of there energy and time, for instances children don't listen to their parents, as before. It is an entire different atmosphere, talking to this generation are a waste of energy and time. Adults teaches children the facts about lives and yet children end up doing the wrong things, Take for example the young 15 years old girls, who get pregant at an early age.

Many children even interfere in the relationship between husband and wife, for example some husband are very jealousy. They feels that wives pay more attention to the children and no mind to them. This kind of envious can really hurts a relationship.

In my opinion I feel people should achieved all the good lives have to offers before having children. Like getting a good education and a good job before making the sacrifice of having a relationship. Children are a joy to have but people should enjoy their lives before making a commitment of having children.

Marie made only 19 miscues in her second text. All of her miscues were syntactically and semantically acceptable. An analysis to determine whether Marie's reading performance provided clues as to how she identified problems and resolutions in her text revealed that, as in her first text, her manner of reading a particular sentence represented the fact that she saw the sentence as problematic.

When Marie orally read her sentence: "Take for example the young 15 year old girls, who get pregant at an early age," she connected it to the previous sentence. Consequently, Marie's oral reading did not reveal that this sentence was a fragment. Her oral reading of the text was as follows: "Adults teaches children the facts about life and yet children end up doing the wrong things, for example, the young fifteen year old girls who are getting pregnant at an early age."

Marie also identified the above sentence fragment as a problem when she identified problems in her text. Her reason for citing this sentence as a problem was that the sentence did not "sound right." Her recommended solution for this problem was an exact replication of the way she had read the sentence during her oral reading. Thus it appears, that in this instance, Marie's miscues reflected her attempt to make her text more cohesive and complete. This attempt at cohesiveness and completeness was motivated by a desire to get her text to "sound better."

Think-Aloud Protocols: Problem Identification and Resolution Strategies

Marie's comments to the text revealed that she was concerned with problems of syntax, cohesiveness, and informational clarity. (See Appendix)

Marie was aware that an essay had a beginning, a middle and an end although her essay did not have coherence and was not cohesive. Her first comment after reading the text was that: "I think I'm just repeating myself too much. There's a lot more problems." She did not identify all the problems that she saw immediately, but she appeared anxious to begin a discussion of them. Her statement thus seemed to reflect a general dissatisfaction with her text.

Marie proceeded to explain how she had mentioned: "In their opinion children are expensive, " in the first paragraph and she then began the second paragraph with: "In their opinion children are expensive. . . ." She indicated that even though she was referring to the topic when she repeated the statement, she was not sure whether it was all right to repeat it.

This questionning of her text suggested that she was not sure about how to connect ideas within a text and wanted feedback from her instructor in order to determine which way to go. She was not clear about how to make a text both coherent and cohesive. It appeared as if Marie intuitively knew that there was a problem with the transition of her ideas in the

text, but did not have the confidence to trust her intuitions about language. She had linguistic competence but was not confident about her linguistic performance. She could identify a problem but could not resolve it.

Marie also indicated that the text had some syntactical problems. Although there were a number of problems with sentence structure, verb tense and subject verb agreement in the text, she only indicated that there were run-ons and fragments. Moreover, she never specified which problems were run-ons or sentence fragments. It appears as if she knew that there were some sentence problems and therefore assumed that these problems would be manifested as run-ons or sentence fragments. Marie had indicated in her interview, that she had learned these terms in this course; however, since she never specified which problems were examples of run ons and fragments, it may be concluded that she was uncertain as to what run-ons and fragments were. Her statement seemed to reflect another instance where one knows the rules or "knows that" but does not "know how."

Marie made further changes involving propositional cohesiveness, syntax and informational clarity and completeness. In the sentence, for example: "It is an entire different atmosphere, talking to this generation are a waste of energy and time," Marie substituted the comma. She stated that: "It looked like something was missing in between there." This was an example of Marie's ability to identify, diagnose and

resolve a problem although she was not aware of the standard English usage to identify this problem.

In short, Marie recognized that there were a number of syntactical problems in her essay and she identified these as problems because they did not "sound right." Some of these problems did not "sound right" to Marie because they lacked informational clarity and completeness or because there was no logical connections between the propositions within the sentence. Marie, as we all do, relied on her ear and on her knowledge about language to attempt to identify textual problems and to make recommendations for solving these problems. Because she was unable to apply many rules of standard written English, many of her attempted resolutions to solving problem in the text appeared to be surface changes. In some instances, she complicated the problem more. She had the conceptual knowledge and experiences of an adult, but she was inexperienced in manipulating standard written English.

In the stimulated recall interview, Marie indicated that she had suggested changes because:

> Some of the sentences wasn't coming across too clearly. . . something needed rewording. . . something was wrong. I needed to add some words to make the sentences sound better. Parts of the essay needed development.

Her comments reflected what she had actually done. Her problem identification strategies and resolutions consisted of rewording, adding examples, and deleting. She was motivated to recommend changes because parts of her text did not "sound right," or were not clear.

Marie indicated that although she could not, ". . . pick up on some of her mistakes," maybe someone else would. This revealed Marie's awareness of her difficulty in "inhibiting her interpretation of the text" (Bartlett, 1982) so that she could effectively identify problems in her text. Moreover, it also revealed that she was not confident in her own ability to identify problems in her text although she had actually identified a number of problems. Her statement, however, was accurate. She, like many basic writers, was only able to identify some of her problems.

Interview

Marie's willingness and ability to identify and recommend solutions to problems in her texts revealed that she knew more about language than she thought she did. However, as she proceeded through her texts, she continually stated that: "I just can't pick up my own mistake . . . I rather you pick up the mistakes." She was not yet confident in her own ability to identify problems and recommend solutions in a text. She preferred to rely on feedback from the instructor. It was apparent during her interview that this was the kind of writing

situation to which she was accustomed. As a student writer, her responsibility had been to submit her paper to her teacher who would "pick up on her mistakes." She seemed to have never been presented with the idea that she could identify and solve her own textual problems and she perceived herself as a student writer who made many "mistakes."

An additional kind of criteria for reading with the intention of improving texts is that the writer should be able to perceive and anticipate the needs of the reader. In other words, the writer should be able to take the needs of the reader into account. When asked what the characteristics of good writers were, Marie stated that a good writer: ". . . explains to you as they write. Sometimes they give examples, they give contrasts." Marie was consciously aware that the writer should be aware of the reader. She also indicated this awareness when she noted during the stimulated recall interviews that her texts might present difficulties for readers.

The end interview provided additional information about the kinds of concerns Marie had as she attempted to improve her texts. Marie indicated that as she tried to improve her texts she looked for the right verbs, made sure the paragraph went with the topic and made sure that she had no run-ons or fragment.

During her interview, Marie indicated that writing started with a good topic. One made sure that the topic was referred to

when writing. One also wrote good paragraphs which helped to develop that topic and one revised the essay once it was written. In Marie's opinion, writing was defined as having a topic and purpose that one was clear about. It was important to refer to that goal and keep that goal in mind as one developed an essay. It was also important that one understood that revision was necessary to the development of a good essay and to the writing process.

Marie's description of a good essay corroborated her concern with the semantic as well as the syntactical levels of discourse. She stated that a good essay: ". . . starts with a topic sentence. The paragraphs are good, the words, the spelling. There are no run-ons, no fragments. . . they have a full stop at the end of every sentence." Marie's opinion of a good essay suggested that she did not feel she had written a good essay. Her essays had all the characteristics that she stated should not be contained in a good essay.

Marie's description of an essay and her problem identification strategies further revealed that she was more concerned with syntax and with the paragraph than she was with the overall focus of the essay. She described reading with the intention of improving her text as: "I look for the right verbs, make sure you using the right verbs in the sentence, make sure your paragraph goes with the topic and make sure you don't have any fragments or run-ons."

Conclusion

An analysis of Marie's oral reading performance provided a clue for two of the problems she identified and the resolutions she proposed. However, it would be misleading to say as Warters (1979) and Perl (1979) suggest, that miscues account for basic writers' problems with composing and editing. Because Marie's miscues occurred on the surface level of text and were minimal, they appeared to impact only slightly on her revision strategies. It, therefore, appears that oral reading performance does not influence how basic writers read with the intention of improving their texts.

Despite Marie's lack of confidence in her ability to identify and solve textual problems, this study revealed that she was able to identify and recommend solutions to many of her textual problems. These problems were manisfested on the lexical, syntactical, and semantic levels. Bartlett (1982) suggests that one criterion for identifying textual problems is that a writer should engage in a "special kind of reading" when reading her own texts. It appears that Marie distanced herself enough to engage in a "special kind of reading."

Marie's descriptions of writing reflected her internalization of "her own rules" for good writing, rules that she had acquired from the limited number of English courses to which she had been exposed. This awareness may have contributed to the fact that she was able to create enough distance to

identify semantic as well as syntactic problems when she attempted to improve her texts.

Marie's reading of her texts with the intention of improving them reflected a problem that many basic writers appear to have, that is, Marie knew certain grammatical and rhetorical terms and rules, but was unable to consciously apply this knowledge in composing and revising her own texts. She was conscious that good writing required the writer's development and elaboration of ideas to a reader in a clear manner; however, she was not yet able to accomplish this in her writing. Her inability to apply her knowledge about writing represented the dichotomy between "knowing that" and "knowing how." As Tierney and Leys (1986) note, we have a responsiblity to show student writers, and in this case, basic writers, how to read their own writing. We must give them opportunities to make the connection between reading and writing.

These are findings from a case study; therefore they should be viewed as tentative and as a basis for further research on how basic writers approach the task of reading texts with the intention of improving them.

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APPENDIX

Partici-pant	Types of Strategies	Own Texts	
		Num	%
Marie	Lexical	5	5
	Syntactical	37	38
	Semantic:		
	Propositional Cohesiveness	6	6
	Structural Cohesiveness	6	6
	External Consistency	0	0
	Internal Consistency	0	0
	Informational Clarity and Completeness	36	36
	Other	9	9
	Total	99	100